

Our Mission for the Children

Child abuse and neglect often occur in families under stress or in the middle of a crisis. Parents and caregivers are sometimes overwhelmed and may not be able to cope with personal, financial or marital problems. Drug and alcohol abuse may also trigger abusive behaviors. Children Services is mandated by Ohio law and abides by the rules and regulations of the Ohio Department of Human Services to provide protection to children living in Franklin County. Children Services is governed by an 11-member board appointed by the County Commissioners. The budget is funded primarily from local property tax levies periodically approved by the voters.

Our Mission for Children:

Each child served is the most important child served by Children Services. Children Services is a culturally responsive child and family-centered agency which provides protection, care and a safe environment for children and youth in need. Services are also provided to strengthen the family and assist parents in meeting the responsibilities for the well-being of their children.

To assure that these children and youth receive protection and care, Children Services works to respond effectively to the needs of our multicultural community, and works cooperatively within the community welfare system and the broader human services system to:

- protect children and youth from abuse and neglect;
- assure that children and youth have safe, permanent homes;
- provide culturally competent leadership and support to promote the well-being of children, youth and families.



Visit us on the web www.co.franklin.oh.us

Franklin County



Our Tomorrow Starts Today

By investing time in our children, we invest time in our future. A variety of services helps move children on to brighter tomorrows.

Adoption & Foster Care 341-6060

Foster Care: Temporary foster parents are needed to provide safe and stable homes until family problems can be worked out or the children move on to adoptive homes.

Adoption: Adopting a child can be a rewarding and heartfelt experience. Many beautiful and lovable children are waiting to be adopted and once again become part of a family.

Volunteers & Mentors 275-2690

Children Services has a variety of volunteer and mentor opportunities designed to enrich the lives of the children as well as the lives of those who give the gifts of time and caring.

- **Friendship Volunteers** share time and activities with a child on an individual basis.
- **Simba & Malaika Mentors** provide Africentric guidance and friendship to African American boys and girls.

24-Hour Child Abuse Hotline 229-7000

Franklin County Children Services is mandated by Ohio law to investigate reports of child abuse and neglect. Child maltreatment may include physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect.



“Children
will be
tomorrow
what we
make of them
today.”



Our Past, Our Future, Our Children...

The Franklin County community has long been concerned about the safety of children and supportive of efforts to strengthen families. This history of caring for children began more than a century ago and continues today.

In 1866, a state law was passed authorizing Ohio counties to provide services to children. Eleven years later, Franklin County voters supported building a Children's Home which provided care for orphaned and abandoned children. In addition, families were found to adopt or accept indenture of children.

In 1945, physicians and other professionals began to take note of child abuse as real problems often disguised as accidents. The state expanded the role of child welfare boards to include protective services, foster care placement and in-home counseling.

As awareness of abuse and neglect grew, mandatory reporting laws were enacted. In the late 1960s, the local board became Franklin County Children Services. Through the 1970s, demand for services grew as changing family dynamics emerged. By the 1980s, new laws had changed child welfare again, increasing its relationship with the Juvenile Court and adding reunification of families as a requirement in service delivery.

The well-being of children continues to remain in the forefront of legislation. The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997 is federal legislation that made child safety the primary goal for Children Services. Concurrent planning toward both reunification with family or a permanent alternative is the focus from the time a child comes into out-of-home care. The mandate of ASFA places more children into permanent custody, causing the recruitment of adoptive parents to be a concern for the entire community.

Through the years, Franklin County Children Services has remained committed to the safety and stability of children while building strong families.

Safe Children, Strong Families...

Children Services is dedicated to ensuring children are safe and living in stable homes. Through programs and services, children move beyond problems toward a brighter tomorrow.

Prevention

Reaching out to families before child abuse occurs may mean the difference between children entering foster care or remaining safely in their own homes. Children Services contracts with community organizations to help provide preventive services to families.

Protection

Linking families with community services such as parenting classes, child care and substance abuse treatment is part of Children Services' commitment to strengthening families. Investigating reports of abuse and neglect within 24 hours is a priority for the protection of children.

Placement

Providing temporary care for children who have been abused or neglected is the role of foster parents, group homes and other residential programs. Foster parents are part of a team of people committed to caring for children and helping rebuild families.

Permanency

When children cannot remain safe in their own homes and families cannot resolve their problems, Children Services searches for permanent homes. Permanency for children includes adoption, relative care or kinship care. Children find stable, permanent homes and become part of caring, loving families through adoption. Ohio's adoptable children are listed on the internet at www.state.oh.us/odhs/oapl, courtesy of the Ohio Department of Human Services.



Social Workers Build Bright Futures

Social workers are the heart of Children Services. They provide protection to children from abuse and neglect and work to ensure that children have safe, stable homes. Social work is an integral part of the health, well-being and safety of the children and families we serve. Intervening on behalf of a child when parents are having problems is often difficult and challenging and requires skill and sensitivity. Social worker intervention frequently makes a critical difference in a child's life.

"I had lost faith in the system for a while. But our social worker stuck with us until the very end. She and Children Services, have our utmost respect."

— A Franklin County Parent